

THE

ל'פמ"א

SHEKEL



VOLUME XLIII

No. 4

JULY-AUGUST 2010

DESCENT INTO DARKNESS



Plus:

- *Ultimate Warrior*
- *Beyond Purim*
- *The extraordinary prutah*
- *Low mintage gold highly collectible*



Published by the AMERICAN ISRAEL NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

HERITAGE

ANCIENTS & WORLD COIN AUCTIONS

The time to consign your ancients: Now! **The firm to choose: Heritage Auction Galleries!** **The numismatist to contact: David Michaels!**

David Michaels has recently joined the team of numismatic professionals at Heritage Auction Galleries as Director of Ancient Coins. David brings a quarter century of experience in Classical coinages, specializing in Roman Imperial coins, with an extensive background in Greek, Byzantine, and Medieval issues.



He started a vest-pocket dealership, Palladium Numismatics, to help finance his coin collecting habit. During the 1990's, he worked with Classical Numismatic Group and Freeman & Sear. David has published several articles on ancient coinage, and is a respected lecturer.

For David, it's as much about the history behind a coin as the coin itself. A visit to Italy in the early 1980s (where he purchased a battered Roman bronze coin in a Florence gift shop) launched his new hobby and, ultimately, a new career path.

Heritage's Beverly Hills showroom. He is applying his passion for the ancient world on behalf of Heritage clients, and looks forward to meeting you on his coast-to-coast travels.

Upcoming World Auction schedule:

Jan 2-7, 2011 NYINC

Consignment deadline: Nov. 6, 2010

April 14-16, 2011 CICC

Consignment deadline: Feb. 16, 2011

Call David today at 800-872-6467 ext. 1606 to discuss your unique situation and Heritage's upcoming auction opportunities, or email him at DMichaels@HA.com.

Receive a free catalog in any category online HA.com/SHEK18828 or call 866-835-3243 and reference SHEK18828.

The World's #1 Numismatic Auctioneer

HERITAGE HA.com

Auction Galleries

Annual Sales Exceeding \$600 Million • 500,000+ Registered Online Bidder-Members

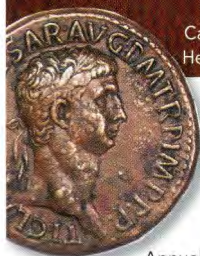
3500 Maple Avenue • Dallas, Texas 752191 • 800-872-6467 • HA.com

800-872-6467 ext. 1000 • 214-528-3500 • FAX: 214-409-1425 • e-mail: Consign@HA.com

DALLAS | BEVERLY HILLS | NEW YORK | PARIS | GENEVA

NYC & IL Auctioneer licenses: Samuel Foose 441001482 & 0952360; Robert Korver 441001421 & 1096338; Mike Sadler 441001478 & 1304630

Heritage Numismatic Auctions, Inc. IL# 444.000370



VOLUME XLIII No. 4 (CONS. No. 232)

JULY-AUGUST 2010

ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Organization	2
President's Message	3
New coins	4
The history of the modern prutah	6
Beyond Purim	13
Profile: Leonard Serkess	19
Avatars of evil	21
Descent into darkness	22
The ultimate warrior: Operation Jonathan	27
AINA Marketplace	31
Jewish-American Hall of Fame exhibit at Virginia Holocaust Museum	33
The numismatic foundations of modern Israel	35
"British Heroes of Holocaust" honored	41
High value in low-mintage Israeli gold coins	43



AMERICAN ISRAEL NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

WEBSITE: WWW.THESHEKEL.ORG

OFFICERS

Mel Wacks, President

Contact Mel via e-mail: ainapresident@lycos.com

Or by telephone: (818) 225-1348

Josh Prottas, Vice-President

Donna Sims, Secretary-Treasurer

GENERAL CONTACT

Donna Sims

P.O. Box 20255

Fountain Hills, AZ 85269

Email: dancin.donna@yahoo.com

EDITORIAL CONTACT

Andrew Perala

P.O. Box 6626

Kamuela, Hawaii 96743

Email: aperala@aol.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mel Wacks, Michael Mooney, Sagi Salomon (2010)

Josh Prottas, Roger Merritt, Ira Rezak (2011)

Donna Sims, Oded Paz (2012)

EMERITI

Florence Schuman, Treasurer Emeritus

Ed Schuman, Editor Emeritus

New era for AINA with ICMC partnership

The relationship between the American Israel Numismatic Association and the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation (now the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation) has been extremely close from Day One. Yitzhak Avni, Director-General of IGCAMC, worked hand-in-hand with Morris Bram and the other founders of AINA, writing a letter of congratulations in February 1968, in which he expressed “our will to extend our closest cooperation ... at all times, for the profit and the pleasure of every collector.”

This cooperation continues with the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation, and reaches new heights with this issue of *The Shekel*. Arthur Boxer, CEO of ICMC, has made the extremely generous offer to print *The Shekel* in full color in Israel at no cost to AINA!

On behalf of the Board of Directors and our members I sincerely thank him. (A picture of Arthur and myself - taken on the AINA tour - is shown above.) And you can thank him in person at the 2010 American Numismatic Convention in Boston (August 10 to 14); Arthur will attend the annual AINA/ICMC meeting on Thursday at 1 p.m. and will often be found at the ICMC booth on the bourse floor. Also, please come over to AINA's table and say “hello.”

One of the benefits of AINA



Image courtesy Mel Wacks
A.I.N.A. President Mel Wacks, at left, with Arthur Boxer, CEO, of Israel Coins and Medals Corporation.

membership is the ability to purchase new coins, medals, etc. directly from ICMC at official issue prices.

All AINA members should be receiving the handsome catalogs mailed from Israel several times each year. If you are not—please write to our Secretary Donna Sims and we will get you on the ICMC mailing list.

By the way, there is no obligation to buy anything. When you buy Israel's coins and medals you don't just acquire silver, gold, etc., you get what Prime Minister Levi Eshkol called “metallic ambassadors of goodwill.”

Happy Collecting!

NEW COINS:

Lion of Megiddo roars on Israel's first .9999 gold!

The 2010 "Jerusalem of Gold" 20 New Sheqalim coins are Israel's first .9999 fine gold bullion issues.

Each coin contains one troy ounce of .9999 fine gold and features the Tower of David on the obverse and the Lion of Megiddo on the reverse.

Prices are set daily based on the spot price of gold. A limit of two coins per customer was set as of June 2, 2010. Delivery could take up to six weeks.

To order, contact:
Israel Coins & Medals,
P.O. Box 2040, Nesher
36660, ISRAEL
Tel. 972-4-8212807 or
go to the website at
<http://www.isragift.co.il>.



New benefit offered to AINA members

AINA members are invited to submit personal classified ads to be printed in *The Shekel*.

Please indicate what Israel or Judaic numismatic items you are looking for or want to sell; and indicate your telephone number, city and email address (optional).

Give us your full name but we will only print your first name for security reasons. Please, no business ads!

Ads have a 30-word limit, and members can send up to three ads in a six-issue cycle.

The ads are free; every effort will be made to include every ad.

Please mail information to:
Donna Sims, P.O. Box 20255,
Fountain Hills, AZ 85269
or send by e-mail to:

dancin.donna@yahoo.com 

ANCIENT HIGHLIGHTS

FROM OUR MAY 30 - JUNE 2, 2010

PRE-LONG BEACH AUCTION



Lot 2416 42 BC. Brutus Aureus NGC Choice AU
Realized \$525,000



Lot 2418 42 BC. Brutus "Eid Mar" Denarius, EF
Realized \$125,000



Lot 2452 Hadrian Gold Aureus NGC Choice AU Star
Realized \$47,000



Lot 2430 Caligula Gold Aureus NGC XF
Realized \$32,000



Lot 2210 The Jewish War AR Shekel, EF
Realized \$29,000



Lot 2437 Galba Gold Aureus NGC Choice VF
Realized \$26,000



Lot 2150 Rhodes, Silver Tetradrachm Superb EF
Realized \$25,000



Lot 2438 Otho Gold Aureus NGC Choice VF
Realized \$23,000



Lot 2461 Marcus Aurelius Gold Aureus NGC MS
Realized \$22,000

Contact Ira or Larry directly today to inquire about special commission rates for our next sale of Ancient and World Coins.



IRA & LARRY GOLDBERG

**1-800-978-2646 or
310-551-2546**

350 S. Beverly Drive Suite 350 Beverly Hills CA 90212
www.goldbergcoins.com

**IRA & LARRY
GOLDBERG**
AUCTIONEERS

"A Family Tradition Since 1931"



Ancient Revival

Anniversary of modern-era coin series reveals endurance of faith's powerful symbols

The year 2010 marks the 60th anniversary of several significant coin introductions in modern Israel.

In 1949 and 1950, the Anglo-Palestine Bank launched seven new prutot-denominated coins into the infant Israeli economy. As the official financial institution of the new nation, the Anglo-Palestine Bank (the assets of which were reorganized into the Bank Leumi le-Israel on May 1, 1951) issued two new pruta coins in 1949, the 50 prutot and the 100 prutot.

The bank subsequently increased the amount of coinage in circulation by introducing coins denominated 1 pruta, 5 prutot, 10 prutot, 25 prutot and 250 prutot. Even though all seven of these coins were dated 5709 (1948-49), the last five listed were not released to the public until the following year, 1950.

An eighth coin, the 500 prutot, bore

Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins

The 1 pruta, above, is the smallest denomination in the modern series and carries the symbol of an ancient anchor on its obverse.

By Thom Curtis, Ph.D.

the same date but was not actually minted until 1952. The fledgling nation chose to reach into its past for the new coin designs.

The obverses of these early coins featured elements that had been included during previous revolts or periods of independence such as the Hasmonaean Dynasty around 100 B.C.E, the first war of rebellion against Rome (66 to 70 C.E.) which resulted in the destruction of the Temple, and the Bar Kochba Rebellion (132 to 135 C.E.).

Many of Israel's coins, both ancient and modern, feature symbols of the land's rich agricultural potential.

The government had selected the pruta (Hebrew: פְּרוּטָה plural: prutot) to represent the 1,000th part of the new Israeli pound.

As the Israeli pound replaced the Palestinian pound, the pruta would re-

Continued on Page 7. First Modern

First modern prutot coins struck in England

Continued

place the mil. The singular “pruta” term was used erroneously on all of the coins issued during this period. Correct Hebrew demands that that plural “prutot” should have been used on all coins except the one pruta. The error was eventually corrected on some later issues.

The term pruta comes from Mishnaic Hebrew meaning “a small coin.”

The Israeli use of the term on its coinage should not be confused with its use in Jewish law, the Halacha. The term is used in Halachic Hebrew to represent the minimal value of money for a number of religious legal purposes.

It is the minimum value one is required to return if stolen; the minimum amount one must invest to be considered an investor.

And the pruta is the minimum that must be exchanged for a marriage to be valid.

In 1948, the Provisional Government of Israel asked the Israel Numismatic Society to provide designs that could be used on coins. According to Fred Bertram and Robert Weber’s book, *Israel’s 20-Year Catalog of Coins and Currencies* (1968) two members of the society, Leo Kadman and Hanan Pavel, worked with a designer and the government printer to complete the artwork.

The new nation introduced three

coins in April and May of 1949. The first coin, denominated 25 mil, was released on April 6, 1949. The initial 25 mil coins were struck on aluminum planchets in Holon, a factory on the outskirts of Tel Aviv and bore the date 5708 (1948-49) or 5709 (1949-1950).

The decision to convert to the pruta denomination was made before minting the 50 and 100 prutot denominations later in 1949.

The bank continued its efforts to meet the demand for smaller change in 1950. Although released in 1950, all coin dates were frozen at 5709 (1948-49).

These coins were minted at two private mints in the United Kingdom through a contract with the Metal Division of the Imperial Chemical Industries of Great Britain. Both mints were located in Birmingham.

The first mint is identified as Imperial Chemical Industries, which is often identified in the numismatic literature as “I.C.I.” The second was known as The Mint, Birmingham, Ltd. and is referred to as “M.B.L.” in some catalogs.

All of the coins minted during this period except the 50 and 100 prutot were minted both with and without a small dot or “pearl” at the bottom of the coins reverse beneath the bar that connects the



Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins
Two varieties exist in the first modern-era 25-prutot coins, with pearl and without pearl. This is the 25 prutot with pearl, which is located at the center bottom below the denomination (right image). Both were struck in the millions.

Continued on Page 8, Prutot Series

Prutot series issued over 2-year period

Continued

olive wreath. Research indicates that the coins with the pearl were manufactured by the Imperial Chemical Industries mint and those without were the products of The Mint, Birmingham, Ltd.

In *Israel's 20-Year Catalog of Coins and Currencies*, Bertram and Wheeler included an excerpt from a statement issued by the manager of Imperial Metal Industries which read in part:

"The pearl was not intended as a mintmark, but was part of the artist's design ... The pearl mark came into existence at the ICI mint only after the completing of the 100 Pruta and after part of the 50 Pruta coins were struck.

"We have no way of knowing which coins were struck at the ICI mint with dies containing the 'pearl mark' as the working dies were destroyed and the master dies sent to Israel."

The mintage figures for the production of the two private mints were compiled by the Royal Mint in London.

Bertram and Wheeler warn that the mintage figures on all pruta denomination coins except the silver 250 prutot and 500 prutot coins are unreliable.

They reported, "No officially published figures are available but estimates of pruta coins melted have run as high as 80 per cent."

They also noted that many of the Proof coins minted by Imperial Chemical Industries went into general circulation. These Proof coins are "all but impossible to identify."



Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins
The 50-prutot coin displays the image of a vine leaf, left above, on its obverse and was first issued on May 11, 1949.

The 100 prutot was first issued on May 25, 1949. It was minted on an alloy consisting of 75 percent copper and 25 percent nickel, and is 28.5 millimeters in diameter and weighs 11.3 grams with a milled edge.

On the obverse is a design modeled on a Bar-Kochba coin (132-135 C.E.). The design features a palm tree and the word "Israel" in Hebrew and Arabic.

The reverse has the denomination and the Hebrew date 5709 (1948-49) encircled by stylized olive branches around the rim.

All 100 prutot trade coins were minted without a pearl at the bottom of the reverse side. Research indicates that 3,062,000 were minted at the Imperial Chemical Industries mint and 3,000,000 were struck at The Mint, Birmingham, Ltd. There were reportedly 20,000 Proof versions minted.

It was fitting that the palm tree design was chosen for the 100 prutot in a continuation of Israeli numismatic tradition. The Bank of Israel website identifies the palm on the 100 prutot as having been modeled from a coin issued during

Continued on Page 9, Bark Kohba

Bar Kochba coinage inspiration for designs



Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins

The 250 prutot features three palm branches on its obverse, above left. Although reportedly no Proof 250-prutot coins were issued, the example above is definitely Proof-like.

Continued

the Bar-Kochba rebellion (132-135 C.E.), however it was also used on Hebrew coins at least twice during prior governments.

The palm tree was featured on coins issued by Herod Antipas who ruled from about 4 B.E.C. to 39 C.E.

Herod Antipas is best known for his association with the deaths of both John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. The palm tree was used again on coins minted during the first rebellion against Rome (66 to 70 C.E.).

According to the Bank of Israel, the 50 prutot coin was first issued on May 11, 1949. It was struck on an alloy of 75 percent copper and 25 percent nickel, and is 23.5 mm in diameter and weighs 5.6 grams with a milled edge.

The bank's website indicates the obverse is a design modeled on coin minted during the first Jewish war against Rome (66 to 70 C.E.). The 50 prutot features a vine leaf and the word "Israel" in both Hebrew and Arabic.

Bertram and Wheeler write that the vine leaf also was used on coins during

the Bar Kochba Rebellion (132 to 135 C.E.).

According to Josephus, golden vine leafs were prominent decorations around the entrance to Herod's Temple. The reverse has the denomination and the Hebrew date 5709 (1948-49) encircled by stylized olive branches around the rim.

There were reportedly 6,040,000 year 5709 (1948-49) 50-prutot circulating coins

minted.

There are no breakdowns indicating how many were struck with or without the "pearl." The version with a "pearl" seems to be the rarer of the two and tends to sell for a significantly higher price. There were reportedly 20,000 Proof versions minted.

The 25-prutot coin was the smallest in size of all the new coins. It was struck on an alloy 75 percent copper and 25 percent nickel, and is 19.5 mm in diameter and weighs 2.8 grams with a milled edge.

The obverse design is modeled on a Bar Kochba coin (132 to 35 C.E.), and features a cluster of grapes and the word ISRAEL in Hebrew and Arabic.

Grapes are a traditional symbol mentioned throughout the Bible and were prominently carved in gold on the Temple.

Their symbolism dates back to the gigantic grape cluster that spies brought to the Children of Israel from the Land of Promise while they wandered in the wilderness.

Continued on Page 10, The 500 Prutot

The 500 prutot never entered circulation

Continued

The coin's reverse has the denomination and the Hebrew date and stylized olive branches encircling the rim.

There are two major varieties of the 5709 (1948-49) 25 prutot.

There were reportedly 10,520,000 5709 (1948-49) 25-prutot circulating coins minted with the "pearl" and 2,500,000 without. There were also 20,000 copies of a Proof version minted at the

The 10-prutot coin also was released on Jan. 4, 1950. The 10 prutot was struck on planchets of 95 percent copper, 3 percent tin and 2 percent zinc.

The 10 prutot is 27 mm in diameter and weighs 6.1 grams with a smooth edge. The obverse also contains a design modeled on a Bar Kochba coin (132-135 C.E.). It features a two-handled amphora and the word ISRAEL in both Hebrew and Arabic.

The amphora is one of three non-agricultural symbols appearing the pruta coins. The amphora represents the vessels used in the temple, and likely reminded Jews during the Bar Kochba rebellion of their desire to rebuild the temple that had been destroyed by the Romans six decades earlier.

The reverse has the denomination and the Hebrew date 5709 (1948-49) encircled by stylized olive branches around the rim.



Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins

The 500 prutot coin, struck on .500 fine silver planchets 37.1 millimeters in diameter, was issued on May 22, 1952 but none of the 34,000 struck coins reportedly were placed into circulation.

There were 7,448,000 5709 (1948-49) 10 prutot coins struck with the "pearl" and 7,500,000 without. There were also 20,000 copies of a Proof version minted.

The final three coins of the pruta

series were issued late in 1950. The 250 prutot was issued on Oct. 11, 1950, and was struck on an alloy consisting of 75 percent copper and 25 percent nickel.

The 250 prutot is 32.2 mm in diameter and weighs 14.1 grams with a milled edge. The coin's obverse features a design modeled from an ancient coin struck during the Jewish war against Rome (66-70 C.E.).

The 250 prutot features three palm branches and the word ISRAEL in both Hebrew and Arabic.

Initially, it was thought by the public that the design represented ears of corn or wheat. But Sylvia Haffner in *The History of Modern Israel's Coins* (1967) writes that the imagery was borrowed from a coin dated to the fourth year of the Bar Kochba Rebellion (70 C.E.), the "three ears of corn" quarter shekel now in the British Museum.

Subsequent research has determined that the art was actually supposed to represent palm branches. The reverse has the denomination and the Hebrew date 5709 (1948-49) encircled by stylized

Continued on Page 11, Mint Mix-up

Mint mix-up switched coin symbols

Continued

olive branches around the rim.

It is perhaps fitting confusion arose over the meaning of the 250 prutot design because there was confusion in 1950 regarding the coin on which it belonged.

According to Haffner, the lyre design that appears on the 5 prutot was actually intended for the 250 prutot instead of the corn/palm frond design and vice versa. The palm branches ended up on the 250 prutot because of a mistake at the mint.

There were reportedly 1,496,000 5709 (1948-49) 250 prutot coins minted with the "pearl" and 524,000 without. There were reportedly no Proof versions minted.

The one pruta was issued on Oct. 25. It was minted on an alloy consisting of 97 percent aluminum and 3 percent magnesium. The one pruta is slightly larger than the 25 prutot, with a 21 mm diameter, but is much lighter in weight at 1.3 grams and has a smooth edge. Its obverse features the second non-agricultural design, an anchor modeled on a coin from the Hasmonaeen dynasty under Alexander Janneus (103-76 B.C.E.), and has the word ISRAEL in Hebrew and Arabic.

The anchor design was repeated on later coins struck during Herodian period when Israel was ruled under the authority of the Romans. The reverse has the denomination and the Hebrew date 5709 (1948-49) encircled by stylized olive branches around the rim.

There were reportedly 2,685,000 5709 (1948-49) 10-prutot coins minted



Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins
Israel's 5-prutot coin was first issued on Dec. 28, 1950.

with the "pearl" and 2,500,000 without. There were also 20,000 Proof coins minted.

Finally, the 5 prutot coin was issued on December 28, 1950. It was minted on an alloy of 95 percent copper, 3 percent tin and 2 percent zinc. The 5 prutot is 20 mm in diameter and weighs 3.2 grams with a smooth edge.

The obverse depicts a design also modeled after a Bar-Kochba coin (132-135 C.E.), and the 5 prutot features the third non-agricultural design, a four-stringed lyre (a small harp-like instrument) with the word ISRAEL in Hebrew and Arabic.

The lyre was played in Temple ceremonies. A young David was summoned by King Saul to play the lyre and soothe his headaches.

The 5 prutot reverse has the denomination, the Hebrew date 5709 (1948-49) and stylized olive branches around the rim.

There were reportedly 7,448,000 5709 (1948-49) 5-prutot coins minted with the "pearl" and 7,500,000 without. There were also 20,000 copies of a Proof version minted.

Continued on Page 12, 500 Prutor

500 prutot coins didn't enter circulation

Continued

The three palm leafs or ears of corn design found on the 250 prutot coin was intended for the 5 prutot. As described above, a mistake at the mint resulted in the designs being switched.

The coinage of the pruta series was not complete until two years later when the 500 prutot coin was delivered on

May 22, 1952. Reportedly, the coins did not enter circulation. Records indicate 34,000 were struck on an alloyed planchet of 50 percent silver, 37.5 percent copper and 12.5 percent zinc.

The 500 prutot is 37.1 mm in diameter and weighs 25 grams with a milled edge. The coin's obverse features a design modeled from a coin minted during the war of the Jews against Rome (66 - 70 C.E.) and features three pomegranates and ISRAEL in Hebrew and Arabic.

Bertram and Weber report that the design is believed to be that of young pomegranates (a delicacy frequently mentioned in the Bible) in transition from flower to fruit. A pomegranate contains hundreds of small seeds. Much sought after as a treat, the pomegranate has long been a symbol of fertility and abundance throughout the Middle East. The reverse has the denomination and retains the Hebrew date 5709 (1948-49) encircled by stylized olive branches around the rim.

The 10-, 25-, 50- and 100-prutot



The 500 prutot coin, about the size of a U.S. silver dollar with 50 percent silver content, never officially entered circulation.

Images courtesy Bank of Israel

coins were subsequently minted with modified dates at the Tel Aviv mint later in the 1950s. The coins continued to be legal tender even after the Reform Coinage (Agora and Lira) was introduced in 1960.

All pruta coins ceased to be legal tender with the introduction of the New Agora and Sheqel series on Feb 22, 1980. [\[R\]](#)

References and recommended reading:

Israel's 20-Year Catalog of Coins and Currencies (1968) by Fred Bertram and Robert Weber. Published by The Louis Denberg Foundation, Inc. of New York.

The History of Modern Israel's Coins from 1917 to 1967 (1967) by Sylvia Haffner. (Self published)

The Story of Israel in Coins (1971) by Jean and Maurice Gould. Published by Wilshire Book Company in North Hollywood, California.

Banknotes and Coins of Israel 1927-2006 (2006) by Yigal Arkin. Published by Bank of Israel in Jerusalem.

Special thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Bill Rosenblum of William M. Rosenblum Rare Coins in Littleton, Colorado and Tova Maktabi of the Bank of Israel for providing photos.

[\[R\]](#)

Thom Curtis, Ph.D., is a professor and chair of the Department of Sociology, University of Hawaii-Hilo. His professional research is in religious radicalism and counter-terrorism.

Purim: Beyond Joy

By Marvin Tameanko

Purim is the most joyous of all the Jewish festivals, with everyone involved thrilled by the Purim story as told in the biblical Book (Scroll or Megilla) of Esther.

Even hard-core skeptics, who claim that all the Bible stories are fiction, are often moved by the story of Esther and Mordecai, whose legend is a perfect *Arabian Nights* fairy tale about a beautiful woman who outsmarts a cruel king. But Esther and Mordecai's story is also the story of how the Persian Jews escaped genocide.

The Purim story is perhaps better than any Hollywood film with a beautiful heroine, a brave hero, an ugly villain, a megalomaniac King, a national disaster and a climax with terrible vengeance.

However, it may be a myth written only as an allusion to the Maccabean victory over the Syrians (Seleucids), the successors of the Persians, who tried to obliterate the Jews in the 2nd



Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins

A Purim jeton, circa 1590, by Hans Krauwinkel portrays, at right, Mordechai, in king's clothing, mounted on the royal horse and led by wicked Haman. Left, Haman is hanging in the courtyard of his house. A similar example of this jeton or counter sold for \$235 in 2009 at William H. Rosenblum Rare Coins.

century BCE.

Based on its style and characters, scholars believe the Book of Esther was actually written about 130 BCE.

Truthfully, if the Book of Esther is a form of historical fiction, it may only be a 'Purim Spiel' (a Purim play), meant as a parable to teach the people about their duty to resist persecution and how even the actions of only two people can save a community.

Continued on Page 14, Esther's story

Esther's story also tale of great revenge

Continued

Having said all that, Purim or the Feast of Esther is a joyous event, where Jews are encouraged to meet with their families, read the Scroll of Esther, boo the villain of the story - Haman - and drown out his name with noisemakers, feast on special foods, drink much, even to the point of drunkenness, make jokes, put on masquerades, perform plays, sing songs, and just be happy.

But Purim also commemorates a violent act of revenge so horrible that some scholars say any mention of God was purposely omitted from the entire narrative.

In fact, the Book of Esther documents an entirely man-made Jewish victory over their persecutors, without any divine assistance, so the absence of God in the story is understandable.

Some scholars claim that earlier, unrecorded violent conflicts between Jews and their neighbors in Persia may have been the basis for the story. But if so, most of the details were concocted and exaggerated for dramatic effect.

This theory in no way diminishes the importance of the Purim story because all nations incorporate myths and legends into their national history where they become enshrined and revered.

The most recent research suggests that Purim is actually based on a Babylonian pagan festival that honored its principal deities with a celebration so popular it was adopted by the Jews of Persia for their own use.

The Babylonian King, named in the Book of Esther as Ahasuerus, begins the story of Purim. Scholars identify him as the historical king of Babylon, Xerxes I (486 to 465 BCE).

Xerxes is the Greek version of his name but the Babylonians knew him as Khshayarsha. By adding a letter A to the front of his name, the change to the Hebrew name Ahasuerus can be easily seen.

Xerxes is best known in history as the king who launched the disastrous Persian invasion of Greece in 480 BCE.

The Persian Empire at that time stretched from India to the Greek Ionian islands and contained a large community of prosperous Jews.

They were the descendants of the Jews brought as exiles to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BCE. Xerxes' power, accomplishments and character are accurately described in the Book of Esther.

Even his command that his Queen, Vashti, appear before his guests to show off her beauty, (possibly naked as claimed by some scholars), reveals the insensitive attitude of a despotic monarch.

According to Herodotus, in his book *The Histories*, Book VIII, 114, Xerxes' queen was actually named Amestris so Vashti is a fabrication, but it may also be similar to the name of the goddess of some foreign country defeated by the Babylonians.

Perhaps she is given this name in the story of Purim to remind the audience that the Babylonians were victorious over many nations and took by force the conquered women as concubines and wives. This would serve as a justification for the Hebrew woman, Esther, to become Xerxes' later wife.

Vashti refused to display herself to the king's court so she was deposed and, in a nationwide beauty contest,

Continued on Page 15, Persian

Persian coins widely used by ancients

Continued

Ahasuerus chose Esther, who had concealed her Jewishness, as his new queen.

The Lydians were the first nation to introduce coinage to the western world sometime in the 7th century BC and when the Persians con-

quered Lydia in 546 BC they took over their mints and began to strike their own coins, actually lumps of silver or gold, impressed with the image of their king, armed and crouching in a fighting pose.

These coins became the universal trade coinage and circulated throughout the eastern empires. Xerxes I continued to strike these coins, called darics in gold and sigloi in silver, and so a crude, stylized image of the biblical King Ahasuerus can be seen on their obverses.

Furthermore, the name for the festival, Purim, is problematic to scholars.

The accepted wisdom is that, as recorded in the Book of Esther, 3: 7, it comes from the word 'pur' (plural, purim), meaning 'lots' that were cast by Haman to determine the date to kill the Jews.

In that instance the lots were probably wooden or bone token pieces inscribed with magical symbols. However, recent research suggests that Purim was actually the name of a Persian



Images courtesy Rosenblum Coins
A 1962 Purim half shekel Proof. The reverse, right, depicts a chalice from an ancient half shekel of the third year of the first Jewish Revolt (66 to 70 C.E.)

spring festival honoring the chief Babylonian god and goddess, named Marduk and Ishtar.

It is also claimed that this Babylonian popular festival was adopted by the Jews of Persia, just like the Jews of North America adopted the Thanksgiving Day holiday and all its rituals, and celebrated it as a festive holiday.

The heroine of the story, Esther, was actually named Hadassah in Hebrew (Esther 2:7), meaning 'myrtle', but she was called by her Babylonian throne name, Esther. This is actually the Aramaic name for the goddess Ishtar and similar in pronunciation to the Arabic/Semitic name for this goddess, Athtar. Remarkably, the Hebrew name Hadassah is similar to the Babylonian word for "bride" and this is one of the many surnames given to Ishtar.

In mythology the Babylonian goddess Ishtar was a goddess of war. She is portrayed in artwork as winged and armed and often accompanied by her

Continued on Page 16, Mythical

Mythical aspects behind Esther's story

Continued

main attribute, a lion.

Ishtar also was a celestial deity associated with the moon and stars. The comparison of Ishtar, a war deity, with the virtuous Esther seems to be impossible. But Esther did instigate a war between Persians and Jews. Perhaps by connecting the two women gave the Persian Jews a way to show that self defense necessarily involved violence when life itself was at stake.

Ishtar later evolved into several eastern deities. One of her most convoluted transformations was into the Greek goddess, Athena, also an armored war deity and one whose symbol was a crescent moon, similar to Ishtar's.

The assimilation of these two deities is not well understood but on Babylonian coins struck by satraps from about 400 to 300 BCE, Athena appeared on Persian coins imitating the tetradrachms of Athens and showing the head of Athena on the obverse.

Athena's owl and crescent moon attributes are engraved on the reverse. In those days the Persians were greatly influenced by elements and symbols of the Greek religion.

Esther was the cousin of a man named Mordecai (Merodach in Hebrew), and was not his niece as is popularly believed.

The name Mordecai is particularly linked between Persians and Jews, and is mentioned twice in the Bible as an important man returning from exile in Babylon, in Ezra 2:2 and Nehemiah 7:7.

Remarkably, the name Mordecai is



Images courtesy Classical Numismatic Group

A tetradrachm of Babylon struck by the satrap Stamenes in 325-300 BC showing the Greek deity of Athena, an evolution of Ishtar. Similar to Sear 6155.

very similar to the name of the chief Babylonian god Marduk, who was Ishtar's own cousin.

It appears logical that Marduk and Ishtar, and Esther and Mordecai - two pairs of cousins - must be more than coincidental.

Marduk was both an agricultural deity and a war god whose animal attribute was a dragon. Marduk is shown often in artwork, particularly on seal stones, as an armed, richly robed king with a dragon at his feet.

As chief god, Marduk often took over many of the functions of the lesser deities. As Esther replaced Ishtar in the fable about the Persian festival, so Mordecai took the place of Marduk and his name Mordecai or Merodach, reflected this transformation.

Haman, the villain in this story, is the prime minister of the king's court who became the archetypal anti-Semite in Jewish history.

The name Haman does not appear in Babylonian history although a similar name, spelled as Khumbam, but pronounced with the initial letter K silent, as Humbam, is well known as the

Continued on Page 17, Antagonist

Antagonist Haman present in Purim story



A wall painting from the Dura-Europos synagogue in Syria, circa AD 256, showing the Purim story with Mordecai, the anti-Semite Haman, King Ahasuerus and Esther.

Continued

chief god of the Elamites.

The Elamites were traditional enemies of the Persians, so in the narrative of Purim, the despised Elamites are besmirched by having their main deity, Khumbam, supplanted by the Babylonian villain, Haman, just as the good god Marduk is replaced by the heroic Mordecai.

This exchange may sound complicated but it is not unusual in mythology. Also, in the Book of Esther, Haman is identified as the son of an "Agagite" (Esther 3:1).

In the Bible, 1 Samuel 15:32, Agag is recorded as the king of the Amalekites, a detested enemy of the Jews who were so evil God orders they be destroyed.

So, Haman is identified in the Purim story as a traditional enemy of the Jews, from birth. Also, Haman's wife, named Zeresh, encourages him to kill the Jews (Esther 5:14). Once again mythology intercedes in the Purim story because the wife of the Elamite god Khumbam is named Kiririsha and, for some scholars, the pronunciation of this historical name is close enough to that of Zeresh to be meaningful.

One of the earliest artistic representations of Mordecai and Esther, and perhaps the entire Purim story, was

painted on the wall of a synagogue in Dura-Europos, Syria, in around AD 256.

The figures in the painting are dressed in contemporary Persian (Sassanian) or Greek costumes so that viewers could easily identify with them.

Mordecai is seen riding a horse led by Haman on the left and Queen Esther is seated to the right of King Ahasuerus.

Esther wears a civic (turreted) crown which associates her with the goddess of the city, and her throne is placed higher than the king's indicating that she is more important.

Archaeologists call this wall painting "The Purim Triumph."

The gods of Elam were eventually assimilated by the Babylonians and other nations so that Khumbam became identified with Marduk and later with the Phoenician god called Ba'al.

Baal's mother was a celestial goddess called Ashtart, a name which brings us back to the Babylonian Ishtar and the Jewish heroine Esther. Ba'al is not really a proper name but an appellation, similar to "the Lord" that hid the god's true name just as the Hebrew "Adonai," meaning "the Lord," re-

Continued on Page 18, Ancient

Ancient gods, myths cross-fertilized

Continued

placed God's personal name of Yahweh.

We have no representations of Khumbam in art work but the power of his image as Ba'al can be seen on numerous Persian coins struck in Babylonia in the 4th century BC by the governors (satraps) ruling Persia under Alexander the Great.

The Persians were overlords of Phoenicia and had adopted their gods to appease the local population. These coins show the Phoenician Ba'al seated and holding a scepter, an image also later adopted by the Greeks to represent Zeus, equivalent in status to Ba'al, on their coinage.

In the story of Purim, Haman sets out to destroy the Jews and convinces the king to agree to this terrible action. Queen Esther, with Mordecai's assistance, intercedes on behalf of her people but by Babylonian law the order of the king that all the Jews be slaughtered could not be rescinded once it has been issued.

So, Xerxes issues a second decree that the Jews in his domains were permitted to defend themselves with armed force. In the following bloody war, the Jews were victorious and killed Haman's ten sons who were leading the attacks then, ironically, hanged Haman on the same gallows he had erected for Mordecai.

As a footnote to remind us of how history repeats itself, it is recorded that Julius Streicher, the notorious Nazi anti-Semite who tried to fulfil Haman's ambitions by killing all the Jews, uttered as his last words, "Purim Fest



Images courtesy Classical Numismatics Group

A tetradrachm or shekel of Babylon, struck in 311-280 BC by the satrap Mazaïos, showing Ba'al, the Phoenician god perhaps derived from the Babylonian god Marduk (Mordecai) and the Elamite deity Khumbam (Haman). Similar to Sear, 6147.

1946," just before he was hanged on a gallows at Nuremberg.

And so Purim became a festival to mark the day that the Jews conquered their enemies and avoided genocide. As the Megilla of Esther tells us, the ancient Jews "*made that day, the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions (gifts) one to another.*" Esther 9:19.

In today's Israel, families still send gifts of food and wine to each other, and many employers treat employees to gift baskets of fruit, nuts and cakes.

In the final analysis, whether it is historical or not, and whether it originated from a pagan Babylonian religious festival or from a commemoration of a Jewish escape from Persian persecution, Purim has become part of our heritage and a joyful festival celebrating the destruction of Evil, not by God but by two fragile human beings, Esther and Mordecai.

And Jews all over the world have been observing the day of Purim for more than 2,000 years, and will do so forever.

Longtime AINA member Leonard Serkess is a definitive collector, caring citizen



Image courtesy Leonard Serkess

Collector Leonard Serkess and wife Sally.

Leonard Serkess was born in Bensonhurst, New York, on January 7, 1925.

His parents, Joe and Rose, were from Romania. Leonard had one older sister. The family moved to Dorchester, Massachusetts, when he was two years old.

Growing up was not an easy thing for Leonard because at a young age he was stricken with polio.

He had always wanted to be a biologist, but at that time, it was not a secure way to make a living. He entered the University of New Hampshire, and after he graduated, he went on to earn two Master de-

PROFILE:

By Donna J. Sims, NLG

grees, one in Social Work and one in Psychology.

In the early 40's, Leonard began his career at the Home for Jewish Children as a house parent.

But it was not long before its administrators realized the potential in Leonard.

They sent him to graduate school where he earned his Masters in Social Work, and in Psychology.

After working at the Home for

Continued on Page 20, A Good Life

A good life spent caring for others

Continued

two years, he became its Director. Leonard married Janice in 1950 and together had two children, Sandra and Michael. Michael passed away at age 36 from cancer.

During his career as a Social Worker, Leonard held many special positions. He worked with disabled children, and Janice became his secretary.

He then became Director of Jewish Family and Children's Services.

This job was followed by working in the prison system, most notably in Bridgewater where he was the first Director of its Sexual Offender Rehabilitation section.

He then accepted the position of Executive Director of Jewish Big Brother for five years.

From that position of responsibility to another of great responsibility, with the Combined Jewish Philanthropies organization.

His major responsibilities included social planning, fundraising, and budgeting.

He then entered the new field of Geriatrics, where he was able to open up several nursing homes, totaling 695 beds, as Executive Director of Social Services for Thomas Flatley.

Through the years, Leonard has been contacted many times from former clients/patients, thanking him for his setting their lives on the right

track.

One even wrote a book about him.

Leonard retired in 1989, as did Janice, and they looked forward to many happy years as a retired couple. Sadly that never happened.

After Michael passed away from cancer, Janice died shortly after.

Seven years later his daughter adopted a little boy from Romania, the love of their lives.

Leonard then married his childhood sweetheart, Sally Green, whose husband had also been a member of AINA with him.

Leonard started young as a collector of stamps—at the age of 10. It was many years later that he began collecting coins along with his son.

Leonard joined AINA in 1965 and still holds a membership to this day.

During the days of all the INS clubs throughout the nation, Leonard was elected as Lifetime President of the INS of Massachusetts.

His collection consists primarily of coins and stamps from Israel.

Through the years he has donated a number of his coin and stamp collections to several noted institutions such as Hebrew College and Regis College.

However, his overall plan is to give his collection to his fourteen year-old grandson, John Michael Serkess. 

AVATARS OF EVIL

WHEN HISTORY DEFIES COMPREHENSION

There is no acceptable explanation, no rational understanding possible when reigns of terror unleash anarchy, chaos and death on the vulnerable.

Mass murder is not uncommon in the span of civilization. History chokes with atrocities across the ages.

Charlemagne beheaded 4,500 Saxon knights after they refusing to kneel to the Cross.

Justinian lured 30,000 rebels to Constantinople's public arena, the Hippodrome, then sealed the exits and ordered all slaughtered by sword.

In the Killing Fields of Cambodia, countless thousands of skeletons float still beneath the surface, silent remnants of a society murdered by its own political leaders.

But no scourge of conquest, no descent into genocide approaches the depravity of the death machine created by



*Image courtesy Israel Coins & Medals
Obverse of the 2003 gold medal to
commemorate the millions of victims of
the Holocaust of World War II.*

the Nazi industrialization of mass murder.

Possessed of an ungodly spirit, the Nazis shot, gassed, starved and tortured millions in an attempt to wipe out an entire nation of people, along with their culture and religion, in the Holocaust.

Millions more were caught in the Nazi net of death. The numbers gloss perception; each of the millions was a person.

The full horror of the Holocaust is absolutely beyond comprehension. Yet. And yet. Their unholy attempt failed.

To the survivors, and to the millions of souls whose lives were so brutally, summarily and arbitrarily ended, we the living are forever indebted.

We can never forget.

To forget is to surrender to evil.

We remember.

- Andrew Perala

DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

VIRULENT ANTI-SEMITISM BOILS ANEW AFTER WORLD WAR I,
CONTRIBUTES TO HOLOCAUST OF WORLD WAR II



*United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Clandestine 1943 photo taken during deportation
of Warsaw Jews to Nazi concentration camps.*

By Andrew Perala

The numismatic record of the Holocaust is not limited to coins, tokens, notes and other essential tools of commerce from World War II.

Years before war began with Germany's 1939 invasions of Czechoslovakia and Poland, official forms of money fostered and perpetuated hatred of Jews.

In 1921, Austria issued numerous anti-Semitic notgeld notes.

Notgeld is money of necessity, or emergency money issued by thousands of local governments in Ger-



*Image courtesy William Rosenblum Rare Coins
A 1921 50-pfennig notgeld note from Austria
with racist stereotyping of Jews.*

man and Austria during and after World War I.

Hyperinflation was the catalyst for the issuance of notgeld. In its benign forms, like the "serienscheine" or series notes, notgeld could be whim-

Please see Page 23, Anti-Semitic

Anti-Semitic notgeld imagery rampant

Continued

sical, artistic, perhaps even reflective of hope and optimism, of making the best of terrific financial duress in an era of hyperinflation.

Following the defeat of Germany and its allies in World War I, demands for reparations, a nearly totally ruined manufacturing base and other complex factors including the hoarding of silver coinage all contributed to unprecedented inflation.

Between August 1922 and November 1923, prices rose faster than the faster-than-light speed inflation of the early universe to a rate of 322 percent per month.

By October 1923, according to *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, "German prices rose at the rate of 41 percent per day."

Workers who got paid in the morning raced to the bank to get their money and then bought food and other essentials before the price rose beyond reach.

But the fuse had been lit, and the economy disintegrated. At its most fevered pitch in 1923, reports PBS, "the exchange rate between the (U.S.) dollar and (German) Mark was one trillion Marks to one dollar."

The impetus for notgeld is understandable. The virulent racist anti-Semitic imagery on the notgeld is less easily understood or explained.

Mass psychology is a tenuous science even in an age of sophisticated electronic brain scanning technology.

Perhaps the simplest explanation is acceptable. The anti-Semitic im-



*Images courtesy William Rosenblum Coins
Dachau prisoner identification tags, in metal, numbered and counter stamped on reverse. A similar tag is shown on the magazine cover.*



*Image courtesy William Rosenblum Rare Coins
A 1922 Sternberg 100-pfennig notgeld note with an infamous anti-Semitic depiction of the destruction of the Holy Wafer by Jews.*

agery notgeld notes reflected deep hatred of Jews welled up over centuries of denigration.

How else to explain the series of 1921 Arnstadt anti-Semitic notes with images of a Jewish peddler carrying a sack, another of a Jew taking coins out of the rear of a bird, another of two Jewish women arguing over money and a depiction of a Jew as the devil? When hatred runs riot,

Continued on page 24, Notgeld

Notgeld imagery descends to basest levels

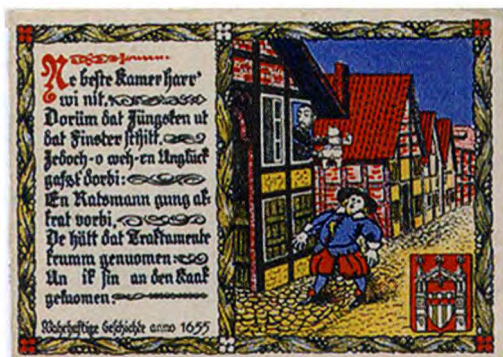


Image courtesy William Rosenblum Rare Coins
A 1922 Brakel 2-mark anti-Semitic notgeld depicts a German walking beneath a window; above, a Jew partially defenestrates a baby, suggesting the German is about to be hit by the infant's defecation.

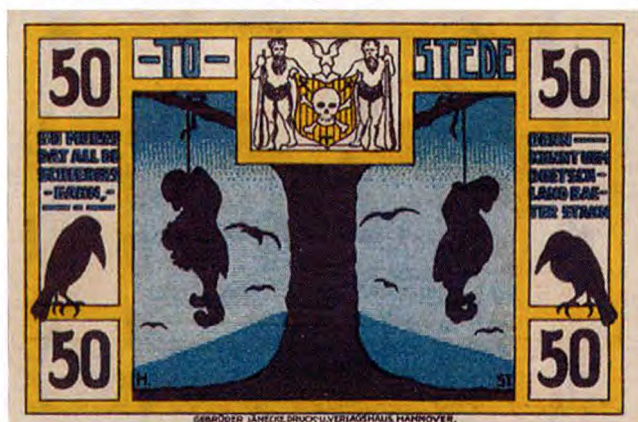


Image courtesy William Rosenblum Rare Coins

A 1921 Tostedt notgeld 50-pfennig note portrays two Jewish peddlers hung from a tree. Inset, two mythic "wild men" of the local Harz mountains, proud Germanic symbols, hold a death banner.



Image courtesy William Rosenblum Rare Coins
A Judenrat Police badge of the Jewish Council of Czesztchowa (Tschenschow) from 1941. Blue enamel on brass.

Continued

rational minds go out the window.

While the overall production of notgeld included notes printed on paper, linen, leather, silk, wood, playing cards, cotton and other inventive stock, the images of anti-Semitic notgeld devolved into the basest expressions that in some cases "disgusted" people so much they rejected the notgeld notes, according to William Rosenblum Coins.

The firm's regular auction catalogs often feature anti-Semitic not-

geld, with notes selling for \$25 to \$75 or more.

But the 1922 Brakel 2-mark anti-Semitic notgeld note (shown above) disgusted so many people the notes were withdrawn and substituted with a bucolic design: a row of houses.

Yet, the tide of anti-Semitic symbols rolled on, especially in matters of trade and commerce, through cloth and metal badges, to the torching of homes and ultimately, people.

In the estimated 15,000 concentra-

Continued on page 25, Holocaust

Holocaust horrors force confrontation of evil



Images courtesy Israel Coins & Medals Corporation

"Everyone has a name - In memory of the Holocaust Victims" official 2003 Israel state gold medal struck in .585 gold (14K); diameter: 30.5 millimeters; weight 17 grams (AGW 0.32 oz); mintage 660 pieces.

Continued

tion camps controlled by the Nazis, Jews, gypsies and other "undesirables" endured final indignities heaped upon them: the venal stripping of wedding bands, gold teeth and dignity from the doomed and the dead.

An image from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is particularly telling. The photograph shows an unidentified soldier, just his arms and hands really, holding a double handful of rings scooped from a wooden box.

The wood box, full of gold rings, was found near Birkenau by U.S. Army soldiers shortly after the infamous concentration camp was liberated.



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

A wooden box found by U.S. Army soldiers near Birkenau is filled with gold wedding bands taken from doomed Jewish prisoners in the infamous death camp complex..

Each ring is a wedding band; from couples, a husband, a wife, or both together. The rings are all that remain of lives lived, loved, lost. [R](#)

Tip of the Spear



*Save the hostages -
Save the nation*

Images courtesy Israel Coins & Medals Corp

An 85-gram, .917 fine gold medal, mintage 90, commemorates Lt. Col. Jonathan Netanyahu's heroism and death in a rescue mission that served notice to all. At right, three C-130 rescue aircraft on final approach.



By Andrew Perala

The plane ride was eight hours long; the rescue mission urgent - in the middle of the night, rescue 106 Israeli and other Jewish nationals held hostage by terrorists 2,500 miles from Israel.

Destination: Uganda's Entebbe airport on the shores of Africa's largest body of freshwater, Lake Victoria, nearly four times the size of the state of Israel.

Some of the hostages had survived WWII death camps. A critical deadline was just hours away. The terrorists would begin sys-

tematically killing hostages if their demands were not met.

Numerous medals have been issued to commemorate a rescue mission that risked all to save lives.

The four-engine turboprop C-130s, in a flight of four followed by a fully equipped military flying hospital, launched separately from Israel, and headed to Africa. Joining over the Red Sea, the planes clipped wave tops to get below Saudi and Egyptian radar.

The pilots were among the best in the entire Israeli Air Force, which is among the

Continued on Page 27 Daring

Daring mission risked all to save lives

Continued

best in the world.

The lead pilot, Shuki Shani, had survived Nazi death camps. Another rescue pilot, Amnon Havli, in charge of flying out the freed hostages, had worked at Entebbe and knew the airport.

Maintaining radio-silence, pilots guided their giant aircraft at such a low altitude that if they had been flying over a suburb, they would have flown through the upstairs windows of a two-story home.

The four C-130 aircraft carried five dozen soldiers of Sayeret Matkal, the secretive and ultra-elite special forces unit of the Israeli Defense Forces.

The rescuer's mission was critical both for the safety of the hostages, as well as on a larger, world stage.

"The rescue operation at Entebbe is significant because it symbolizes the profound transformation of the Jewish people in the intervening thirty-one years since Bergen-Belsen," said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in an address to the Knesset on June 5, 2006.

"The Jews were no longer helpless in the face of their enemies' murderous designs. They had a savior in the form of the State of Israel and the Israeli Defense Forces."

Mission failure was not an option with many lives and the soul of a nation at stake.



Medal courtesy Thom Curtis

A privately issued medal for Operation Jonathan features the flight route, left, and the rescue aircraft, at right.



*Image © 2005
DigitalGlobe*

A 2005 satellite photo shows the main runway, left to right, of Entebbe's airport. The rescuers approached over the waters of Lake Victoria at night.

As the planes flew into the night of July 3, 1976, the soldiers focused on the plan and their preparatory tasks: checking and re-checking the readiness of weapons and ammunition, rehearsing silently, internally, again and again, the plan itself. Talking was difficult; the cavernous interiors of C-130s are not sound-proofed. The roar of the four 4,300 horsepower engines drowns all.

Rehearsed live before departure, the plan required an initial force of 29 Sayeret Matkal soldiers to surprise and overwhelm any Ugandan soldiers protecting the terrorists, then eliminate the terrorists before they could

Continued on Page 28, Rescue

Rescue mission renamed to honor hero

Continued

unload their automatic weapons and grenades on the hostages.

It was a complex multi-level plan brilliant in its simplicity; the brainchild of Lt. Col. Jonathan “Yoni” Netanyahu, who brought more than a decade of covert Sayeret Matkal experience to the task of ironing out the plan’s final details. Yoni was pulled from a still-classified mission to prepare for the rescue mission.

The planes would land without lights and cargo ramps lowered.

As the attack aircraft taxied up to the target terminal, a black Mercedes sedan and two Land Rover SUVs would launch out of the still moving lead aircraft and speed toward the airport terminal building. Additional soldiers would follow. All would wear the uniforms of the Ugandan army.

Once the vehicles reached the terminal, with its control tower on top, the rescue team would leave the vehicles, run toward the building, burst inside, kill the terrorists and escort the now-freed hostages to a rescue C-130 that would immediately take off for Kenya and medical care.

The plan hinged on a critical fact of Ugandan life: in the confusion of the unannounced arrival, the rescuers needed the Ugandan soldiers to believe that Idi Amin, the notoriously erratic and lethally brutal leader of the country, had arrived suddenly, without warning.



Image courtesy Menachem Coins & Medals of Israel
Operation Jonathan honors Lt. Col. Jonathan Netanyahu, whose vigorous planning and heroic death gave notice to the world. Above, another view of the gold version of the 25th anniversary official gold medal honoring Netanyehu. Shaded fields are the result of photographic lighting techniques.

Before final approval was granted, though, Lt. Col. Netanyahu had to convince the military’s top man, Defense Minister Shimon Peres.

Peres summoned Netanyahu to his office. “Yoni, can it be done?” Peres is reported to have asked.

Netanyahu assured him yes, absolutely, and in a live rehearsal the next day, the team proved the plan’s potential when it successfully rescued “hostages” from a mock Entebbe airport terminal constructed almost overnight at a secret desert location.

Meanwhile, Col. Ehud Barak of the special forces flew to Kenya to coordinate elements of the plan requiring the aircraft to refuel there on both legs of the rescue flight.

More than luck guided their preparations. Kenya’s government was supportive of Israel’s rescue mission.

The Sayeret Matkal unit was founded, in part, as a deep-cover military reconnaissance and intelligence gathering force.

Continued on Page 29, Medals

Medals commemorate dawn of new era

Continued

After the Air France Airbus 330 was hijacked on June 27, 1976 on a flight from Athens to Paris, Israel's intelligence gathering machine, lead by the Mossad, quickly discovered that Israeli contractors had built the old Entebbe terminal building.

Agents found some of the contractors, learning specific details about the building's layout and floor plan.

But more information was needed. How many terrorists? What types of weapons did they have? Where were the hostages kept? What room did the terrorists reserve for themselves?

Two lucky breaks for gathering more intel were bad omens for the hostages.

The terrorists, two from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and two from the West German "Revolution Zellen," plus three additional terrorists who joined them in Entebbe, released 47 non-Jew hostages on June 30. On July 1, all other non-Jew hostages were released.

From the released hostages, Israel's intelligence agents learned the Ugandan military was cooperating with the terrorists.

The agents also got answers to their other specific questions, as well as the locations of the hostages and terrorist movements.

But the release of the non-Jews, and the concentration of the remaining Jews as hostages, were ominous cullings.

The hijackers had made their intent clear from the moment they commandeered the Air France Airbus 330 passenger jet.

Former hostage Ilan Hartuv told the BBC on the 30th anniversary of the rescue that "the German woman hijacker was saying all kinds



Images courtesy Israel Coins & Medals
The 1976 bronze official state medal for Operation Jonathan also features the flying sword of rescue on the obverse, right, and a biblical quote on the reverse, at left.

of anti-Semitic things. She was very nervous. She took the pin out of the hand grenade so if someone tried to grab her the plane would be blown up."

The terrorists demanded the release of fellow terrorists from prisons in various countries.

Israel's government offered to negotiate to buy time. As clock ticked toward the final deadline, the ultra-secret rescue team flew at top speed toward Uganda.

The C-130 Hercules, also known as the Rhinoceros in the Israeli Air Force, is an enormously capable aircraft. But at 374 knots tops, a C-130 flies slowly compared to jet fighters.

An Ugandan Air Force squadron of MiG-17 fighter jets, although ancient 1950s-era technology, but capable of flying twice as fast as the C-130s after they left Entebbe, needed to be eliminated.

The 11 MiGs on the ground, fortunately, were parked near the terminal.

An Ugandan army base also was located next to the airport. No one knew how well organized the Uganda military response would be once the rescuers landed.

Continued on Page 30, Hostages

Hostages recalled events 30 years later

Continued

The element of surprise was critical.

"My fear was not being killed," pilot Lt. Col. Joshua (Shuki) Shani told the BBC in 2006. "It was of not succeeding, and the whole story would be one of disaster."

Shani's C-130 landed at Entebbe at 11 p.m. on July 3. First Sergeant Amir Ofer was seated in the back of the second Land Rover as all three vehicles roared full speed toward the terminal.

Even at that late hour, the control tower and its big windows were clearly delineated against the night sky, marking the rescue team's destination.

In 2006, Ofer recalled those critical first moments in an interview with the BBC. "As we moved towards the terminal I said to myself, 'we are now 29 people. It will be very interesting to see how many will be left alive five minutes from now.'"

Two Ugandan soldiers almost immediately challenged the speeding convoy. They were shot dead.

The gunshots alerted the other Ugandan soldiers and the terrorists.

As Lt. Col. Netanyahu sprinted toward the terminal building, the first soldier to race toward the building, the tip of the spear, he was shot by AK-47 fire and fell.

The rescue team charged forward; no fallen soldier would be cared for until the mission succeeded. The team burst into the terminal, shot dead all the terrorists and escorted the hostages to their C-130. The MiGs were blown up by another team.

Yoni died on the tarmac, the only Israeli military casualty.

Four hostages died in the rescue. All others flew to safety.



Lt. Col. Jonathan "Yoni" Netanyahu

"Entebbe is significant" said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2006, not only for saving the hostages but also for "the decisive blow this (mission) struck against international terrorism."

Prime Minister Netanyahu is the younger brother, by three years, of the rescue mission's hero, Lt. Col. Jonathan (Yoni) Netanyahu. His grief for the loss of his brother is always with him, he said.

Speaking to *The Jerusalem Post* on the 30th anniversary of the rescue, intelligence officer Muki Belzer, by now a Colonel and then a co-planner with Yoni Netanyahu of the raid, stressed the importance of the Entebbe rescue.

"This is a Zionist event that connects all Jews," Belzer said. "The hijackers separated the Jews from the non-Jews, which reminded us of the Holocaust," Belzer said.

"We have to remember we are one people with one destiny ... and we need to remember this particular operation."

To honor the men of the mission and Lt. Col. Netanyahu, the Israeli military officially changed the name of the mission to Operation Jonathan in 1976. 

A.I.N.A. Marketplace

The numismatic dealers, companies and organizations listed below support AINA and we encourage our members to use their services. Please mention that you saw their ad in The Shekel when you contact them. If your company would like to support AINA and get new clients, the cost for a Marketplace ad is only \$200 per year. The cost for a full page ad is just \$750 per year. Your ad will be seen by more than 1,000 readers six times a year. Contact Mel Wacks at (818) 225-1348 or send e-mail to: ainapresident@lycos.com.



The Highland Mint produces medals of top quality at a remarkably low cost. They are the official minter for AINA and the Jewish-American Hall of Fame. Contact Vince Bohbot, Vice President, at (800) 544-6135 and tell him that you are a member of AINA to get a special deal.

OUTSTANDING JUDAICA on EBAY with pictures, information, pricing on our website or by mail
JEWISH MADE WWII GERMAN FAKE OPERATION BERNHARD £5 Ebay # 250296538401
PRECURSOR ISRAEL MONEY 5 & 10 LIROT ERETZ YISRAELI 1947 Ebay # 260099664569
WORKS of Art from HOUGHTON JEWS CHRISTIE'S 1994 BOUND Ebay # 250270708594
JEWISH (BARZILAI) LIRE MONETA PATRIOTTICA 1848 VENICE Ebay # 260105316304
1850 FRANZ JOSEPH I OFFICIAL PASSPORT FOR ISRAEL HERZL Ebay # 260272223905
DENMARK JEWISH COMMUNITY WWII RESCUE — SILVER MEDAL Ebay # 260112898417
UNC ISRAEL 1 SHEKEL (P51-A) PORTFOLIO with COIN & STAMP Ebay # 260138703127
#1 MONEY MAN, PO Box 1, RP-NJ 07660 USA / 800-775-8480 or 201-641-1700

www.NumberOneMoneyMan.com

JEWISH THEME ITEMS - PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Buy & Sell Stamps, Coins, Tokens, Medals, Paper Money, Propaganda Material, Postcards, Photos, Bonds, Books, Letters, Documents (official and otherwise). GOLD & SILVER Religious and anything of historical interest from these areas: anti-Semitic items, NAZI Era 1933-45 wanted. Send description and photo. Israel Bick (ANA, ASDA, APS, AINA) PO Box 854-ai, Van Nuys, CA 91408 ibick@sbcglobal.net phone) 818-997-6496; (fax) 818-988-4337 Est. 1952

FOR SALE:



I have been a collector for 40 years. My grandchildren do NOT want my Israeli Coins and Medals. I sold all my gold medals. I have hundreds of Silver and Bronze. Also Judaic Heritage sets (120 silver Jews of America), Bronze Dali Tribes of Israel (12), many many specials. Call Martin at (203) 531-4666 or email zaag6@aol.com (Greenwich, CT).



AMPHORA

P.O. Box 805
Nyack, NY 10960
845-358-7634
AmphoraCoins@aol.com



Ancient Judean, Biblical, Greek, Roman, Byzantine Coins
Www.AmphoraCoins.com

IRA & LARRY GOLDBERG

AUCTIONEERS

Accepting consignments of Ancient, World and U.S. Coins for our three major auctions held each year. Specializing in Ancient Judean Coins. Member PNG, Life Members ANA. A family tradition since 1931.

350 S. Beverly Dr., #350 · Beverly Hills, CA 90212 · (800) 978-2646 · Fax (310) 551-2626

Visit our website: www.goldbergcoins.com



WILLIAM ROSENBLUM/RARE COINS

P.O. Box 785 Littleton, CO 80160-0785
Tel 720-981-0785 Fax 720-981-5345
bill@rosenblumcoins.com www.rosenblumcoins.com

For the past 30 years we have been the world's leading dealer in all aspects of Ancient Judaea, Israel, Palestine and Judaica (including the Holocaust) as related to coins, medals, banknotes, tokens, etc. Life Member of ANA, former member Board of Directors of AINA, Member of the International Association of Professional Numismatists.

Commemoratives International, Ltd.

Dealers in Israel Coins, Banknotes & Collectibles since 1947

Hamden Center II
2321 Whitney Ave Suite 505
Hamden, CT 06518
Phone (203) 230-0221
Fax (203) 248-6628

Visit our website:
WWW.COMMEM.COM
E-mail:
coins@commem.com



THE TOKEN AND MEDAL SOCIETY (TAMS)

Publishes a bimonthly journal, has a library available to members, and an annual meeting at the ANA. TAMS and AINA jointly sponsor the Ben Odesser Award for the Best Article in "The Shekel." Dues are \$25 (U.S.) and \$30 (non-U.S.) Send to TAMS, % Mark Lighterman, 5224 W. State Rd. 46, No. 408, Sanford, FL 32771.

Provocative exhibit asks:



“What If?”

By Mel Wacks

A provocative new permanent exhibit opened May 16, 2010 at the Virginia Holocaust Museum in Richmond.

Plaques created by The Jewish-American Hall of Fame form the basis for the large exhibit, “The Impact of Jewish Intellect on America and the World” exhibit, which asks the question “What If?”

What contributions to mankind might have been made by the 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust or their never-to-be-born descendants?

What if one of the murdered millions had discovered a cure for cancer, HIV/AIDS or Alzheimer’s?

Would fossil fuels have become obsolete had an alternative been discovered by one of the Jewish children exterminated by the Nazis?

The beginning of the exhibit features Emma Lazarus, along with her sonnet *The New Colossus*, including the immortal words “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

Walking down a corridor, visitors will view plaques pertaining to *The Jewish Presence in Early America*, followed by *In Defense of Liberty*, *Righteousness*, *Righteousness Shall You Pursue*, and

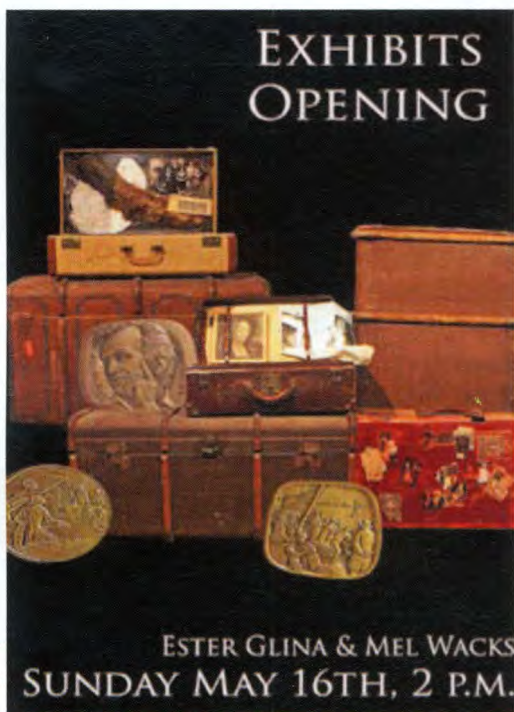


Image courtesy Virginia Holocaust Museum
A poster celebrates the opening of The Jewish-American Hall of Fame exhibit at the Virginia Holocaust Museum along with an exhibit created by artist Esther Glina—consisting of suitcases bearing the names of family members who disappeared in the “night and fog” of the Holocaust.

then a rotating group that features members of the entertainment field.

A plaque of Jewish-American Hall of Fame founder, Mel Wacks, is also included in the permanent exhibit. In his

Continued on Page 34, Long journey

Long journey ends as JAHF finds a home

Continued

Opening Day remarks, Mel likened the ancient Israelites' sojourn in the desert to the 40 years it took for The Jewish-American Hall of Fame to find a permanent home.

Launched in 1969 as an educational project of the Magnes Museum in Berkeley, California, the JAHF inducts an honoree (or in rare instances honorees), with a commissioned portrait by a prominent sculptor.

Limited edition medals struck from the sculpture then are offered to the membership and the public.

The new exhibit evolved from a profile article on Jay Ipson, an AINA member, written by Donna Sims in *The Shekel*.

Mel Wacks called up Jay to congratulate him on founding the Virginia Holocaust Museum.

As Ipson and Wacks talked, the realization arose about the possibility of exhibiting the Jewish-American Hall of



Photo courtesy Virginia Holocaust Museum
Holocaust survivor and founder of the Virginia Holocaust Museum Jay Ipson. The plaque on the wall behind Ipson features Emma Lazarus.



Photo courtesy Mel Wacks
Dr. Simon Sibelman, assistant director of the Virginia Holocaust Museum with Mel Wacks, founder of The Jewish-American Hall of Fame, as they admire the plaque of Albert Einstein.



Photo courtesy Mel Wacks
Esther and Mel Wacks on opening day of the exhibit.

Fame plaques at the museum.

It turned out that space was available—and the exhibit expanded its coverage to become a permanent resident at the museum.

For further information about the Virginia Holocaust Museum visit www.va-holocaust.com; and for data about The Jewish-American Hall of Fame, visit www.amuseum.org/jahf.

Creating modern Israel

By Simcha Kuritzky, NLG



Images courtesy Stack's
Gold aureus of Judaea Capta series, struck 72 to 73 A.D. in Rome. Obverse, left, Titus as emperor; reverse, right, veiled and draped Judaea seated, facing right, mourning at foot of palm tree with six branches. In January 2009, this example sold for \$10,925. Judaea Capta coins in silver, and bronze, are far more affordable.



Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was the modern State of Israel. Her physical and financial infrastructure, governmental and social institutions, and national identity were created over decades, turning a backwater province of the dying Ottoman Empire into the most progressive state in the Middle East.

In a series of articles documenting the main historical events and trends, we will see the resurrection of the Jewish state after nearly two millennia of exile and subjugation, from the start of Jewish emancipation to the provisional government of the modern State of Israel.

Supporting illustrations include a range of numismatic items: medals, coins, currency, and tokens.

The goal is ambitious. Books have been written on this subject; these articles are but a brief overview. There are a number of different numismatic items

that could represent a given historical event or concept.

Many of the items used as illustrations in the series are affordable. A few cost more than \$200, most cost less than \$50.

This series of articles could be useful as a guide for readers to build his or her own historical type-set of numismatic or related items.

A collector also could collect more recent medals or coins commemorating the events, periods, or concepts that are the history of the creation of the modern state of Israel.

The Jews are an ancient people whose history goes back more than three millennia.

Their earliest history is described in the Bible. In ancient times, the Jews, like their neighbors, were the subjects of empires.

Continued on Page 36, Long Road

Long road from ancient Judaea to modern Israel

Continued

Unlike their neighbors, though, the Jews did not readily abandon their customs and God for those of their conquerors.

It was this stubborn clinging to the God of Israel that kept alive the people of Israel and the concept of the nation of Israel.

For Jews, the Dark Ages began when the Romans destroyed Judaea, the Temple, and Jerusalem in 70 C.E. at the end of an unsuccessful five-year revolt by Jewish zealots.

Most Jews were exiled. Those who remained in the Land of Israel were subject to the whims of their conquerors.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Jews maintained their own autonomous communities even as Pagan, Christian, and Moslem rulers imposed special taxes and restrictions on their Jews.

Some rulers slaughtered Jews or forced them to convert. The Jews compared their fate to that of the moon: sometimes waxing, sometimes waning.

They prayed thrice daily for the re-establishment of their own country under an anointed king or priest (moshiyakh or messiah) chosen by God.

The practice of Zionism was included as part of holidays as well.

At Purim time, when ancient Jews collected the Temple Tax, medieval and modern Jews sent donations to schools in the Holy Land.



Images courtesy Commemoratives International, Ltd. An "Edict of Toleration" medal by Christian Reich, struck in 1782. The obverse portrays Emperor Joseph II of Austria with the legend below TOLERENTIA IMPERANTIS or IMPERIAL TOLERANCE. The reverse has three figures representing Protestants, Catholics and Jews beneath a symbol of the Eye of Providence.

The Passover seder - a commemorative meal - ended with the singing of "Next Year in Jerusalem."

And fruits of the land of Israel were part of Sukot, the harvest festival.

Emancipation

Jewish emancipation occurred at different times in different places. In part, emancipation was a natural outgrowth of the humanism developed by Renaissance artists and scholars, as well as a more widespread development of nationalism that emerged as technology broke down barriers to communication and transportation.

In 1781, Emperor Joseph II of the Hapsburg Austrian Empire repealed taxes and most restrictions mandating where Jews could live and what jobs they could hold.

The Edict of Toleration was the first such official proclamation in Europe - although by the time of its issuance, many Jews already had left Europe for overseas colonies where enforcement of such rules was lax.

Continued on Page 37, Long Road

Napoleon played pivotal role in Holy Land

Continued

Several medals commemorate the edict, including a 42-millimeter medal designed by Johann Leonhard Oexlein, and a 42-millimeter medal by noted U.S. coin engraver Christian Reich, above.

There are two versions of the Reich medal; the rarer variety shows the Jews; the more common medal replaces Jews with Eastern Orthodox Christians. The rarer version is shown here.

Under the edict of Joseph II, Jews were encouraged to give up the customs setting them apart from their Christian neighbors, but were not compelled to give up their religion, although that was encouraged.

Other nations followed, granting greater freedoms to Jews and other oppressed peoples: the United States



Napoleon's invasion of the Holy Land alarmed the British, who mounted a successful naval expedition to stop the French. A 1799 medal obverse commemorates the victorious British military commander, ADMIRAL SIR S. SMITH. The reverse, right, depicts the British lion guarding the Turkish camel from the privations of the distant French tiger.

(Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the Bill of Rights in 1789-91), France (following the 1789 revolution), as well as many other countries conquered by Napoleon Bonaparte.

Greater freedom presented Jews with an existential dilemma: were they a nation in exile (as tradition maintained), or were they citizens of various nations who just worshiped in their own way?

The Jews had confronted this same issue under the Hellenic empires, but it had been a moot point for more than 2,000 years.

Some Jews readily identified with the nation in which they lived, be it France, Britain, the United States, or Prussia. They adopted the customs of the land, and adapted their religious observances accordingly. This adaptability soon gave rise to the Reform Movement, which taught that only ethics-based commandments were still obligatory, and allowed their members to eat non-kosher food and move the Sabbath to Sunday. Other Jews insisted on retaining their



NAPOLÉON LE GRAND,
rétablit le culte des Israélites, le 30 Mai 1806.

French leader Napoleon Bonaparte, depicted in the regalia of a Roman Caesar, is shown as protector of the Jews, holding a copy of his law granting greater freedom to Jews, in an 1806 illustration.

Continued on Page 38, Emancipation

Emancipation rose from revolution

Continued

unique identity and customs, and called themselves members of the Orthodox Movement.

Napoleon as savior

Napoleon Bonaparte not only emancipated the Jews of western and central Europe, he was a Christian Zionist whose wars inspired messianic fervor in many eastern European Jews.

France conquered Egypt in August 1798, and pursued the Turkish defenders into the Holy Land. Napoleon's army captured Gaza in February 1799, Jaffa and Haifa in March; conquests that included most of the lands along the coast of modern Israel.

On April 20, Napoleon issued a proclamation from Jerusalem to the "rightful heirs of Palestine, the Israelites" declaring his intention to re-establish the Jewish homeland as a state under the Empire, similar to what had been granted for the Italians and Spaniards.

However, before this could be done, the French were stopped at the Akko (Acre) fortress by the Turks holding the fort, with powerful support from a fleet of British warships off the coast.

By June, the French had retreated back to Egypt. If the French had, instead, conquered the Turkish province of Syria, perhaps many Jews would have traded the comfort of emancipation in Europe for the hardship of rebuilding their ancestral homeland, but today we can only speculate.

In 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia, and that country's Jewish leaders were divided on the issue of emancipation, and whether it was worth the cost of assimilation.

Three great Hasidic rebbes, Mendel of Riminov, the Maggid of Kozhenitz and the

Seer of Lublin declared that Napoleon's wars were the birth pangs of the messiah, and that the end of the Jewish exile was at hand.

While Napoleon's invasion of the Holy Land was short lived, the French leader's broken campaign brought the Land of Israel back into the sphere of European awareness and influence.

Revolution

Emancipation was not to come easily.

After Napoleon's defeat, most European leaders restored absolutist rule backed by a Christian noble elite. Liberals of different backgrounds opposed this, rising up a number of times throughout the 19th century.

The largest uprisings included the revolutions of 1848, which saw the French Kingdom replaced by the Second Republic, the Austrian Emperor flee Vienna, Hungarian autonomy and later independence, the Prussian King hailed as the Emperor of a united Germany, and an attempt to reunite Italy. Jews were well represented among the revolutionaries, as only the rebels proposed to give them equality under the law.

Bavaria was the first German state to bow to popular uprising. King Ludwig I abdicated in March 1848 due to pressure from both the left and the right as the Church opposed his affair with a Scottish dancer.

A liberal parliament ruled for one year, passing a number of reforms.

The Bavarian edict of 1813 had given Jews citizenship but maintained severe restrictions on where they could live, and many had to leave (most departed for the New World) in order to marry.

In 1848, Bavaria granted Jews full emancipation. Meanwhile, Eduard Simon, a Koningsberg Jew, presided over the

Continued on Page 39, Air

Air of emancipation lead to settlements

Continued

Frankfurt Parliament, which was tasked to create a united Germany.

A medal commemorating the Bavarian revolution of 1848, pictured above, is laden with symbols and statements that offer detailed insights into the culture of the period.

The obverse, seen above at left, depicts two men clasping hands as they raise their right arms.

Broken chains lie at their feet; CONSTITUTION is carved into the stone pediment behind them. The obverse legend, in German, translates as UNION FOR PEOPLE'S RIGHTS - FOR PEOPLE'S BENEFIT.

The medal's reverse features a ring of eight wreaths. Inside the ring of wreaths, the legend translates as ACHIEVEMENT OF THE BAVARIAN PEOPLE OF 6 MARCH 1848. Each wreath also has a legend.

Clockwise, from the top, they are: FREE PRESS, POLICE UNDER THE LAW, PUBLICLY ESTABLISHED CONSTITUTION, BETTER ISRAELITE RELATIONS, MILITARY OATH TO CONSTITUTION, ENSURE STATE'S RIGHTS, ELECTION REFORM, RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY.

The words echo the U.S. Constitution.

But this medal was undoubtedly issued before the counter-revolution of 1849.

The successes of the revolution were short lived. The Frankfurt Parliament disbanded in 1849 after King Frederick Wilhelm IV of Prussia refused their offer to become German Emperor.

The Austrians retook Hungary, restored order to Vienna, and retook their Italian possessions. In 1851, the French



A 37-millimeter medal by Carl Drentwett, circa 1848, commemorates a short-lived Bavarian revolution. The obverse, left, shows two men grasping hands in front of a pediment with CONSTITUTION writ large. The reverse's eight wreaths proclaim free press, police under the law and better Israelite relations, among other proclamations of defiance and of individual rights.

Second Republic became an Empire under Napoleon III.

In Bavaria, Jewish emancipation was overturned in 1850 and not realized until after German unification in 1871.

Early settlement

Emancipation only affected Jews living in modern, liberal states. Most Jews lived in countries that were still in the Dark Ages as far as they were concerned.

When Jews struggled for equality as citizens of the nation in which they resided, they could not support Zionism, which called on them to become members of another state.

Still, Jews in more prosperous countries created and supported Jewish colonies where their persecuted brethren could go to become more self-sufficient and free.

But in 1881, conditions dramatically worsened for Russian Jews when Czar Alexander II was assassinated and his successor, Alexander III, decided to blame the Jews.

Anti-Jewish riots, known as pogroms, broke out across the vast nation, and more than a million Jews were forcibly relocated

Continued on Page 40, First

First colony established with hope, hard work

Continued

into towns and villages in Poland and western Russia.

The movement Khivat Tziyon (Love of Zion) encouraged emigration to the Land of Israel. Some 25,000 Jews left Russia and Yemen for the Holy Land in what is now called the First Aliya Ascent (1880 to 1904), roughly doubling the Jewish population.

There were also a number of other Jewish colonies founded in other countries, including Argentina, Canada and the United States.

A medal commemorates the 1882 founding of Rishon LeTziyon First to Zion, the first agricultural settlement inside Israel created by Jews from outside.

Unlike many future pioneers, the residents of Rishon LeTziyon were religious. The colony had a rough start until they enlisted the assistance of Jewish financier Baron Edmond de Rothschild.

Rothschild provided financial support and sent agricultural experts, who eventually set up the Carmel winery that is in existence to this day.

The first Zionist flag (now Israel's state flag) was flown at Rishon LeTzioon. "Hatikva" ("The Hope," now the Israel national anthem) was composed there. At Rishon LeTzioon, spoken Hebrew re-emerged as the daily vernacular, the first expression since ancient times.

The Rishon medal is a 28-millimeter bronze with a loop; traces of a silver wash can still be seen on some examples. The obverse shows fields and buildings with



Images courtesy Commemoratives International, Ltd
An 1882 medal commemorates the establishment of Rishon Le-Zion (spellings vary depending on source) colony. At left, far frame, people at prayer at the Western Wall; the other frame shows a famer planting seeds. At right, a panoramic view of the community. In bronze, 28 millimeter diameter, with loop.

the date in Hebrew 5642 ה'תרמ"ב (1882 CE), and the inscription below ראשון לציון Rishon LeTzion Colony.

Around the top is the Biblical passage from which the colony was named ראשון אתן לציון הנה הנם ולירושלים מבשר אתן (Isaiah 41:27) I was first to tell Zion, "Behold, behold them," and to Jerusalem a message of good tidings [that the Babylonian captivity was ended].

A pair of archways in a circle are on the reverse, one shows Jews praying at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the other shows a man sowing seeds.

The Hebrew inscription around the edge is Psalm 137:5 אם אשכח ירושלים תשכח אם איני זכור אתך ירושלה, אם ימני יישכח ימיני If I forget thee, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its use.

Inside the circle is a Y Magen David and Psalm 14:7 *מי יתן מציון ישועה ישראל* Oh that the salvation of Israel came out of Zion! This medal was issued for the 10th anniversary of the colony in 1892.

NEXT: Backlash!

Honoring 28 who dared to help

Twenty-eight men and women were honored at private reception with then-Prime Minister Gordon Brown at No. 10 Downing Street in early March.

At a reception at his official residence, Brown recognized the 28 as official British Heroes of the Holocaust, presenting each with a sterling silver medallion.

The ceremony capped a lengthy campaign to recognize the daring and often efforts of men and women that were little recognized in the decades following World War II.

Only two of the 28 are still alive. Relatives or representatives received the posthumous awards.

Several of the honorees already had been recognized internationally for their acts of essential humanity in attempting to rescue Jews from the horrors of the Holocaust.

Sir Nicholas Winton organized the rescue of 669 mostly Jewish children from Prague in 1939. Winton, age 100, has earned numerous international honors for the rescue, including official recognition and awards from the modern Czech Republic.

Winton attended the ceremony at 10 Downing Street with Denis Avey, the only other living British Hero of the Holocaust whose efforts in WWII were not publicly



Image courtesy Agnes Grunwald-Spier
The Royal Mint's "British Heroes of The Holocaust" medal features hands clasped in a universal gesture of offering aid and, in this case, rescue

known until this year, according to British press reports.

Avey was a British prisoner-of-war in a POW camp adjacent to Auschwitz. He risked his life to smuggle food and cigarettes to Jewish prisoners in the Auschwitz camps through a simple yet ingenious and extraordinarily dangerous tactic.

At night, Avey would walk over to a relatively unwatched part of the fence separating the two compounds.

The furtive handing over of a cigarette soon blossomed into wholesale exchange

Continued on Page 42, Risking All

Risking all to save others from “bestiality”

Continued

of clothing: Avey traded his POW uniform for the striped uniform of a Jew, allowing the prisoner to walk unimpeded into Avey's POW prison for hot food and in some cases, a good night's sleep.

“We were faced with this bestiality every day,” Avey told the “Telegraph” newspaper in March. “And we knew exactly what was happening in there, and I suppose being an Englishman I recognized this and wanted to do something about it,” he said.

The man Avey helped was a German Jewish inmate, Ernst Lobethall, according to “The Jewish Chronicle” newspaper.

Other men and women recognized as British Heroes of the Holocaust include:

- Ida and Louise Cook, sisters who helped 29 German and Austrian Jews escape to Britain.
- Major Frank Foley, an agent of England's MI6 spy agency who posed as a passport officer at Berlin's British Embassy in Berlin, supplying an estimated 10,000 Jews with phony exit visas.
- Former British POWs: Stan Wells, Alan Edwards George Hammond, Roger Letchford, Tommy Noble, helped save the life of a Sara Rigler, a young Jewish girl they hid in a hayloft.

The medal's obverse side shows clasped hands against a background of war-darkened clouds with IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY as the legend.

The medal's reverse has a raised device to engrave the name of the recipient; the



Image courtesy Agnes Grunwald-Spier
Reverse of the medal “British Heroes of the Holocaust” includes device to engrave recipient's names. Each medal is struck in .925 fine silver, is 50 millimeters in diameter, and weighs 66 grams.

legend IN RECOGNITION OF ... WHOSE SELFLESS ACTIONS PRESERVED LIFE IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION surround the individual's name.

The stories of the individuals involved in the various rescues of Jews from the Holocaust so intrigued Briton Agnes Grunwald-Spier, herself a Holocaust survivor, that she began writing a book.

The Other Schindlers: Why Some People Chose to Save Jews in the Holocaust by Agnes Grunwald-Spier was released in the United Kingdom in June, and will be released in the U.S. in November 2010.

“Let us never forget that what happened is, yes, an epic of cruelty but yes, too, it is an epic of courage, of people who did so much to help other people,” Brown said at the medal ceremony. [R](#)

All images courtesy
Israel Coins & Medals Corporation
At right, the reverse of the 2006
"Reservists in Israel" gold coin
and the obverse of the 2008
Shmuel Agnon gold coin, far
right, both honor great achieve-
ment. Below, obverse of the
"Reservists in Israel gold Proof.



The rare 444

*Recent commemorative gold coins
struck in exceedingly low mintages*

By Mel Wacks

There are two factors that affect the price of coins – rarity and demand. One without the other probably means that the value could stagnate.

Lots of coins are called "rare," like the famous 1909-S VDB Lincoln Cent with a mintage of 484,000 (catalogs for \$2,200 in Mint State 63, or Choice Brilliant Uncirculated) or the 1907 High

Relief Double Eagle with 12,367 minted (catalogs for \$26,000 in MS-63).

And then there are the super-

rarities like the 1879 Flowing Hair \$4 gold piece with a minuscule mintage estimated at 425-plus ... and a catalog value of \$145,000 in Proof-63; or the 1915-S Panama-Pacific Exposition Round \$50 gold piece with a net mintage of 483 ... cataloging at \$80,000 in MS-63. Well – a collector can dream, right?

Actually, the U.S. Congress authorized a mintage of 1,500 Panama-Pacific Exposition Round \$50 gold pieces and the mint struck them all. But they didn't all sell at the official price of \$100, and so 1,017 were melted.

Unfortunately, we can't go back in time and snatch some of these coins from the melting pot. But perhaps there



Continued on Page 44, Ultra-low

Ultra-low mintages equal hidden value

Continued

is a lesson to be learned – that popularity can change dramatically with time.

And so we come to the beautiful Proof-quality commemorative gold coins issued by Israel in recent years – all with tiny mintages of only 444.

The subject matter is diverse: Higher Education (2006), Performing Arts (2007), Shmuel Agnon (2008), 60th Anniversary of Independence (2008), and Military Reserves (2008).

Each of these legal tender coins contains 16.96 grams of 22 kt (.917 fine) gold – which is equivalent to exactly 1/2 troy oz. of pure gold.

These coins probably deserve to be far more popular than they are – because of their potential appeal to those collecting by theme or by Israelis or by millions of Jews around the world or those searching out “sleepers.”

All it will take is a little blip in demand and the prices could take off according to the age-old Law of Supply and Demand.

But you should never buy a coin just for investment.

The primary reason for purchasing coins should be their appeal to you, personally, because of its subject matter,



*All images courtesy
Israel Coins & Medals Corp*

The 2006 “Higher Education” Proof gold coin celebrates the accomplishments of Israel’s world-class institutions of higher learning a half ounce of gold.

design, quality, as well as the value of the precious metal content.

Let’s look at the subject matter and design of these very low mintage Israeli coins, and you can judge if they deserve a place in your coin collection.

2006/5766 “Higher Education” 10 New Sheqalim Proof

The Israel 58th Anniversary gold coin salutes Higher Education. The coin’s obverse design consists of symbols representing Science, the Humanities, Technology, Mathematics and others – outlined by the mortar-board shape of a student’s graduation cap.

The inscription HIGHER EDUCATION IN ISRAEL is written in the three official languages of Israel - Hebrew, Arabic and English.

The reverse also features the mortar-board graduation cap shape along with the State Emblem, the date according to the Jewish and Gregorian calendars,

Continued on Page 45, Proof

Proof gold coins honor nation's best

Continued

and the Hebrew letter "mem" beside the denomination, indicating a Proof coin.

A Proof coin is made with special care, and is struck on polished planchets, using polished dies.

Proof coins exhibit a mirror-like surface in the fields and a frosted appearance on the raised areas of the coin.

Higher Education in Israel routinely reaches and surpasses high international standards.

More than 150,000 students attend eight world-class universities, including the Hebrew University, Technion, and the Weizmann Institute of Science.

The number of doctoral students is increasing and three Israeli scientists have been awarded Nobel Prizes.

The New Sheqel

The sheqel was used as a standard weight for silver in ancient Judaea long before there were coins, as when "David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty sheqels of silver" (*II Samuel 24:24*).

While modern Israel issued its first coins in 1948, they did not begin using the Sheqel denomination until 1980.

The Bank of Israel replaced the Sheqel with the New Sheqel on Sept. 4, 1985 at the rate of one New Sheqel per 1,000 "old" Sheqels, and the coin denominations have continued as New Sheqels ever since.

In numismatic literature, the spelling may appear as either *Shekel* or *Sheqel*, and the plural in Hebrew is *Sheqalim*. Another of the Rare 444 honors Israel's



In 1966, writer Shmuel Agnon won Israel's first Nobel Prize, for Literature. The 2008 10 New Sheqalim gold Proof honored his achievement.

first Nobel Prize winner, in Literature, Shmuel Agnon.

2008/5768 Shmuel Agnon 10 New Sheqalim Proof

The first issue in the "Nobel Prize" coin series features Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1887 to 1970) who won Israel's first Nobel Prize in 1966, for Literature.

Agnon was born Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes in Galicia (Ukraine) and emigrated to Palestine in 1908. Agnon's works, which have been translated into many languages, deal with the inherent conflict between traditional Jewish life and the modern world.

His writings also attempt to recapture the fading traditions of the European shtetl (village).

In later years, Agnon's fame was such that when he complained to the municipality that traffic noise near his home was disturbing his work, the city closed the street to cars and posted a sign that read: "No entry to all vehicles, writer at work!"

Continued on Page 46, Rare

Military Reserves, 60th anniversary honored

Continued

Future issues in this series likely will honor Israeli Nobel Peace Prize winners Menachem Begin (1978), Yitzhak Rabin (1994), and Shimon Peres (1994).

2008/5768 Israel's 60th Anniversary 10 New Sheqalim Proof

The gold coin commemorating Israel's 60th Anniversary of Independence (declared on May 14, 1948) artistically represents Israel's aspirations towards peace and prosperity in the future.

The obverse design features the number 60 formed by a dove and a pomegranate.

The first biblical reference to a dove occurs when the dove released by Noah returns carrying an olive branch in its beak, indicating that the Great Flood had receded. The pomegranate is symbolic of the Holy Land's fertility.

An olive branch is depicted at the bottom of both sides.

2008/5768 Military Reserves 10 New Sheqalim Proof

Since the founding of the State of Israel, reserve soldiers have been an essential part of the strength and power of the Israel Defense Forces.

Reserve units have participated in all of Israel's wars since 1948, with both men and women serving alongside the regular army, contributing to the defense and security of the young nation.



Above and at left, the all-important Military Reserves gained special honor in 2008 with a Proof gold coin commemorating their sacrifices, at home and for the nation.



The 60th anniversary commemorative of 2008 is another gold Proof coin and celebrates Israel's 60th anniversary as a nation.

This gold coin's design superimposes a child's teddy bear pendant and a soldier's ID tag, reflecting the dual nature of reserve duty - commitment to family and to country.

Following regular military service, men and women may be called for reserve service of up to one month annually, until their mid-40s, and may be called for active duty immediately in times of crisis.

Continued on Page 47, Performing Arts

Performing Arts commemorated in 2007

Continued

The Israeli military does not disclose how many soldiers are active.

But according to *Jane's World Armies*, Israel's standing army of about 125,000 troops can jump to 500,000 with rapid mobilization of the reserves - 250,000 of them within six hours.

In addition to these Israel gold coins with mintages of only 444 pieces, there are other recent issues with extremely low mintages of only 555: 2006 Abraham and the Angels, 2006 Tel Aviv, 2007 Olympics "Judo," and the 2007 Isaiah "Wolf with the Lamb."

2007/5767 "Performing Arts" 10 New Sheqalim Proof

Israel's 58th Anniversary gold coin salutes the Performing Arts. The obverse design features a dancer, actor and musician. Israel's Performing Arts are internationally acclaimed, and are familiar to audiences from Moscow to Los Angeles.

The troupes include the Habima Theater, Israel's National Theater, which was actually founded in Moscow in 1918 under the auspices of the Moscow Art Theater, guided by Constantin Stanislavski. The Habima came to Tel Aviv in 1931.

Another well-known troupe, the Cameri Theater, has attracted more than



Abstract, flowing human figures suggest graceful performance on the reverse of the Proof gold 10 New Sheqalim "Performing Arts" commemorative issue of 2007.

20 million people to some 500 theatrical productions in its 69 years of existence.

Also noteworthy is the Batsheva Modern Dance Company, which is regarded as one of the leading world dance companies; and the highly respected Israel Philharmonic Orchestra which performs more than 200 concerts a year in Israel and abroad.

Most Israel gold coins with mintages of 444 or 555 can be purchased in the aftermarket for well less than \$1,000. New issues can be purchased directly from the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation.

To receive advance notice of low mintage coins, and much more information on Israeli coins and medal, with special reduced prices for subscribers (there is no obligation when you become a subscriber, but you can reap the rewards of being a subscriber!) by writing to:

ICMC, P.O.B. 2040, Neshet
36680; or communicate and become an e-mail subscriber: medals@coins.co.il 

If you like Ancient Judaeen coins, the coins & medals of modern Israel, Judaic coins & medals, and Jewish history ...
You will love reading the entertaining and informative articles in ...

THE

SHEKEL

Here's what our readers say ...

"The Shekel is just great," S.R. of Cleveland, Ohio

"I read it cover to cover," C.C. of Santa Rosa, California

"Articles are fun and informative," L.E. of Mahwah, N.J.

"I like the personal touch of The Shekel very much," T. Herrmann of
Radolfzeil-Böhringen, Germany

"I devour every issue," P.N. of Vernon, Vermont

**MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN ISRAEL NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION
RECEIVE 6 ISSUES EVERY YEAR OF THE 48-PAGE SHEKEL MAGAZINE,
PLUS A FREE ANNUAL COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL.**

Mail to: AINA, PO Box 20255, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269, USA

or call in your credit card to (818) 225-1348

or email your name, address and credit card information to:

ainatreasurer@lycos.com.

Name _____ Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____ email _____

I wish to join AINA and receive The Shekel magazine for a full year:

☐ \$18 (USA or Canada) ☐ \$34 (2 years USA or Canada)

☐ \$25 (Overseas) ☐ \$48 (2 years Overseas) ☐ \$10 (Junior under 20)

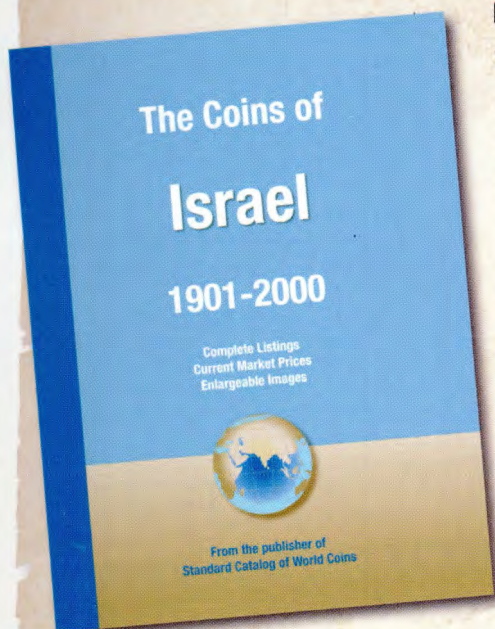
☐ \$300 (Life Member) **Check is enclosed payable to AINA or charge:**

☐ Visa ☐ MC No. _____ Exp _____

For gifts, please list recipients on a separate sheet of paper.

To learn more about AINA, visit our web site at **www.theshekel.org**.

The Coins of Israel



New from **Krause Publications**, this easy-to-search downloadable pdf contains identifying details and pricing for all 20th century coins from Israel, based on the *2010 Standard Catalog of World Coins 1901-2000*. In addition to intricate descriptions with mintage, metal composition, weight and dimension, and actual-size photos of coins, you gain a thorough **explanation of the Hebrew dating system** as well as a gallery illustrating each mark from 1948 through 2000.

In addition, each listing includes **current pricing in up to five grades of condition**. Plus, with this Mac and PC-compatible pdf you can search coin listings using key words or the index, and enlarge pages by 400% for your own large-print online version.

The Coins of Israel 1901-2000

By George S. Cuhaj and Thomas Michael

Item No. #Z7307

Format: Download:PDF

\$7⁹⁹

Order yours today!

Krause Publications

700 E. State Street • Iola, WI 54990-0001 • 715-445-4612

www.numismaster.com • www.shopnumismaster.com

GOLD COINS FROM ISRAEL



THE FIRST BULLION, TOWER OF DAVID



BIRDS OF ISRAEL



THE ISRAEL NATIONAL TRAIL



MASADA / "UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES" SERIES



AKKO (ACRE) / "UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES" SERIES



PARTING OF THE RED SEA



SAMSON AND THE LION



SERVING IN THE RESERVES



FIFA 2010



SHMUEL YOSEF AGNON



ICMC - ISRAEL COINS & MEDALS CORP
SOLE DISTRIBUTOR OF COINS ISSUED BY THE BANK OF ISRAEL

www.israelmint.com

since
1958